



# Leon County

## Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida  
(850) 606-5300 [www.leoncountyfl.gov](http://www.leoncountyfl.gov)

### MY VIEW

## County to Roll Out Development Support Upgrade

*Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator*

This week the Leon County Commission approved the roll-out of a new “upgrade” to the County’s permitting processes featuring significant enhancements to better facilitate the highest quality development for our community and the highest quality service to our development customers. This upgrade “roll-out” will initiate the latest slate of improvements resulting from a culture of listening to our development industry customers. We have a long and proven track record at the County which contrasts sharply with recent newspaper coverage depicting a local regulatory environment which is growth-averse, business unfriendly or marred in bureaucratic “red tape.” Before I hit the highlights and invite you to learn more about this upgrade and where we go from here, it’s important to provide a more complete picture of where we truly are when it comes to permitting in our community.

In our recent past, Leon County has done everything from repealing impact fees to advancing millions of dollars of construction projects during the Great Recession to provide a bridge, creating jobs for our local developers while other communities languished. We have continuously streamlined processes and expanded conveniences like: online permitting, GIS and after-hours and weekend building inspections. We even built the Renaissance Center with the City of Tallahassee for no other reason than to create a one-stop shop for permitting countywide and later added a design studio at that location to provide technical assistance and add value to private projects at no cost. And just this past December at the County Commissioner retreat, the Board adopted a goal in the County’s strategic plan to reduce single family home permitting times by 30%.

Although efforts like these tell a different story about permitting in our community, it is also true that many of the services we have put in place are not utilized as often as possible, particularly on the front end of the development process. And while on a daily basis customers express genuine satisfaction and appreciation of the professional level of service and assistance they receive, still too many complaints and perceptions persist related to the time and complexity of the development approval process.

The upgrade includes enhanced customer service and outreach efforts that are “high tech and high touch” for all paths of customer interaction. One of the most significant features of the upgrade includes the creation of a Chief Development Resource Officer,

a professional “ombudsman” charged with providing in-depth consultation, facilitation and problem resolution to our customers and with making continuous, real time process improvements. This position will also staff a newly created ‘Advisory Committee for Quality Growth’ made up of development industry professionals and community stakeholders to provide continuous feedback and guidance.

Acknowledging that perceptions of Leon County as business unfriendly or growth averse may still exist among some, it is a distant notion to those of us who serve in Leon County Government. We believe that community stewardship and customer service are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, by offering efficiency, clarity, certainty and value-added assistance, we facilitate the highest quality development attainable for our community. I invite you to learn more about this upgrade at [LeonCountyFL.gov/Upgrade](http://LeonCountyFL.gov/Upgrade) and your feedback is always appreciated.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Vince Long became County Administrator on July 1, 2011, and has worked for Leon County since 1995. He can be reached at (850) 606-5300 or [LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov](mailto:LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov).

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